

FINAL REPORT

I. The Southern California Commercial Sportfish Catch Database

Charles T. Mitchell, Principal Investigator
MBC Applied Environmental Sciences
3000 Redhill Avenue
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
(714) 850-4830, FAX (714) 850-4840, mitchellmbc@woddnet.att.net
Grant No. NA76FD0050, May 1999

II. Abstract

The daily catch of commercial sportfishing boats along the southern California coast are reported in the Los Angeles Times newspaper. Microfiche copies of the L.A. Times from 1959 to 1997 were searched and more than 14,000 daily reports were assembled and photocopied. These data, representing almost 400,000 catch reports for some 25 sportfishing landings were compiled into a CD-ROM database that allows rapid retrieval of historical catch and angler effort data and the analysis of spatial and temporal trends.

III. Executive Summary

The daily catch reports from commercial sportfishing landings in southern California were extracted from the Los Angeles Times newspaper from 1959 to 1997. Approximately 400,000 reports from individual landings located from San Simeon to San Diego were compiled into a computerized database. The daily data included the fish species, number caught, number of boats fishing, and the number of anglers. Provided on a CD-ROM, the database allows rapid retrieval of historical catch and effort data for the analysis of spatial and temporal trends.

IV. Purpose

A. Detailed Description of Problem or Impediment of Fishing Industry that was Addressed

To monitor sport and commercial fish catch in California the Department of Fish and Game initiated a logbook system where the sportfisher-operator recorded the daily catch, number of anglers, and the area where the fish were caught. These data were available to staff within the Department of Fish and Game, and occasionally researchers, but were not generally available to the public. This project sought to develop a long-term fishery database that could be easily updated and kept current by individual users. The product would aid managers and the public in evaluating resource priorities and making informed decisions regarding management of those resources.

B. Objectives of this Project

The project objective was to complete the computer entry of 29 years of sport catch data to form a database spanning a total of 36 years.

V. Approach

A. Detailed Description of the Work That Was Performed

Microfiche copies of the Los Angeles Times for the years 1959 to 1997 were examined and the daily "Fish Report" was extracted. These data were compiled and entered into a computerized database using dBASE software.

B. Project Management: List Individuals and/or Organizations Actually Performing the Work and How it Was Done

Overall project management was accomplished by Charles T. Mitchell of MBC Applied Environmental Sciences. MBC staff contributing to project management included Mike Mancuso, Kathryn Mitchell, Julie Nichols, and David Vilas. Data entry was accomplished by MS Data Service Corporation working under a subcontract to MBC. Conversion of the database to DBASE, and final assembly on to CDROM was accomplished by Daniel Vu of Onsite Environmental Staffing, working as a subcontractor to MBC.

VI. Findings

A. Actual Accomplishments and Findings

The database was assembled into a readily useable format which allows users immediate access.

B. If Significant Problems Development Which Resulted in less than Satisfactory or Negative Results, They Should Be Discussed

The assembly of the database was slowed considerably by the use of outside data entry services. Data entry personnel were not accustomed to the entry of such material and significant problems were encountered due to "learning curves" of the numerous persons that were involved in the entry process. Hundreds of hours more than anticipated were required to conduct quality control and to correct errors after data entry. This delayed the completion of the project. In the future, it is recommended that in-house technical staff familiar with the database be utilized to enter or revise the data.

C. Description of Need, If Any, for Additional Work

At present, 1997 is the most recent year in the database. For the database to be effectively utilized it must be kept current, therefore some provisions should be made to update the database on an annual basis.

VII. Evaluation

A. Describe the Extend to Which the Project Goals and Objectives Were Attained. This Description Should Address the Following:

1. Were the goals and objectives obtained? How? If not, why?

All of the project goals and objectives were obtained.

2. Were modifications made to the goals and objectives? If so, explain.

No modifications were made to the goals and objectives.

B. Dissemination of Project Results:

The project results have already been utilized by staff of the National Marine Fisheries Service and the California Department of Fish and Game in assessment of the population status of two species of rockfish. A presentation of the database is scheduled for the fall of 1999 at a national scientific symposium and may be posted on the NMFS website for public availability.